

VLR-4/15/75 NRHP-6/10/75

85-103

Form 10-300  
(Rev. 6-72)UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:
Virginia
COUNTY
Shenandoah
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

1. NAME			
COMMON:			
Meems Bottom Covered Bridge			
AND/OR HISTORIC:			
Meems Bottom Covered Bridge			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: Route 720 over North Fork of the Shenandoah River; .5 mile west of intersection of Route 720 with Route 11.			
CITY OR TOWN:		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT	
vicinity)		Seventh (J. Kenneth Robinson)	
(Meems		CODE	COUNTY
Virginia		51	Shenandoah
STATE			CODE
			171

3. CLASSIFICATION			
CATEGORY (Check One)		OWNERSHIP	
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public	
<input type="checkbox"/> Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure		<input type="checkbox"/> Private	
<input type="checkbox"/> Object		<input type="checkbox"/> Both	
		Public Acquisition:	
		<input type="checkbox"/> In Process	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	
		ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC	
		Yes:	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Restricted	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted	
		<input type="checkbox"/> No	
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural		<input type="checkbox"/> Government	
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial		<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational		<input type="checkbox"/> Military	
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment		<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	
<input type="checkbox"/> Park		<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	
<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation		<input type="checkbox"/> Comments	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)			
public use			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY Douglas B. Fugate, Commissioner			
OWNER'S NAME:			
Virginia Department of Highways and Transportation			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
1401 East Broad Street			
CITY OR TOWN:		STATE:	
Richmond		Virginia	
		CODE	
		51	

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION			
COURT-HOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:			
Virginia Department of Highways and Transportation			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
1401 East Broad Street			
CITY OR TOWN:		STATE:	
Richmond		Virginia	
		CODE	
		51	

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (2)			
TITLE OF SURVEY:			
(see continuation sheet			
(I) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey #1			
DATE OF SURVEY: 1974			
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local			
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:			
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
221 Governor Street			
CITY OR TOWN:		STATE:	
Richmond		Virginia	
		CODE	
		51	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:
Virginia
COUNTY:
Shenandoah
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) #1

STATE Virginia	
COUNTY Shenandoah	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

- (2) Virginia Department of Highways Survey  
1970 State  
Virginia Department of Highways and Transportation  
1401 East Broad Street  
Richmond, Virginia Code:51

## 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
Structural Stabilization	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Meems Bottom Bridge is a 204-foot single span Burr Truss covered bridge spanning the North Fork of the Shenandoah River south of the town of Mount Jackson. It survives in a good state of repair and is used daily by local traffic. Erected 1893-1894, the bridge is supported by massive stone abutments that fan out from the bridge on each side of the river and which extend a full ten feet below the bed of the river. The rectangular cut limestone blocks were quarried locally. The bridge's timbers of rough, sawn pine were cut and fashioned on Strathmore, the farm of General G. S. Meems, who accompanied Stonewall Jackson in the West Virginia campaign of 1861-1862. The bridge's Burr Truss or Kingspost Arch form of construction consists of two wood arches spanning the 204-foot distance between the abutments and joining them eight feet below the top of the stonework. Both arches are composed of three, 7" x 15" members, bolted together by three-quarter-inch diameter bolts to act as a single member. The bolts are placed at each point of the arches where they intersect a vertical, horizontal or lateral vertical bracing member.

The vertical truss supports are 8" x 10" members. All diagonal truss members are 7" x 9" members. The horizontal roof members that span between the arches are 8" x 10" members. The horizontal bottom chord that supports the roadway is composed of two 7" x 12" beams. The 4" x 14" floor beams that span between the arches on top of the bottom chord once supported the original road bed. In 1937, strengthening of the bridge was accomplished with seven-inch steel I-beams being installed parallel with the bottom chords extending the length of the structure. A new roadway surface was then placed over the original. Steel I-beams were also installed parallel to the original floor beams resting adjacent to the vertical truss members below the road bed.

The top chords run perpendicular to the vertical truss members the length of the structure at the top of the walls. Each top chord is composed of two 7" x 10" members bolted to the vertical members situated between them.

The arches are tied together by lateral bracing members above the walls and below the roadbed that cross between the vertical members and bolt into them.

JY

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

## PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Pre-Columbian;☐ 16th Century☐ 18th Century☐ 20th Century☐ 15th Century☐ 17th Century☒ 19th Century

## SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Aboriginal☐ Education☐ Political☐ Urban Planning☐ Prehistoric☐ Engineering☐ Religion/Phi-☐ Other (Specify)☐ Historic☐ Industry☐ Philosophy☐ Agriculture☐ Invention☐ Science☒ Architecture☐ Landscape☐ Sculpture☐ Art☐ Architecture☐ Social/Human-☐ Commerce☐ Literature☐ itarian☐ Communications☐ Military☐ Theater☐ Conservation☐ Music☒ Transportation

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Meems Bottom Bridge, a 204-foot single span covered bridge is the longest of the remaining covered bridges in the Commonwealth. The bridge is noted for the high quality of both its timber and masonry construction, as well as for its unusually scenic setting.

The bridge is of the Burr Truss or Kingspost Arch construction patented in 1817 by Theodore Burr, brother of Aaron Burr, and was constructed in 1894 under the supervision of F. W. Wisler. The date is inscribed on the stone facing of the east abutment.

The bridge replaces two earlier structures, the first was burned in 1862 by General Stonewall Jackson ahead of General Freemont before the battle of Harrisonburg. The second bridge succumbed to the high waters of a flood in 1870 that reportedly destroyed every bridge across the Shenandoah River.

JY

# 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Allen, Richard Saunders. Covered Bridges of the Middle Atlantic States. Brattleboro, Vt.: Stephen Green Press, 1959.

Condit, Carl W. American Building Art. New York: Oxford University Press, 1960.

Wayland, John W. The History of Shenandoah County, Virginia. Strasburg, Va.: Shenandoah Publishing House, Inc., 1969.

# 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

UTM References:  
17/703830/4288180

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than one acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

# 11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE: April 1975

STREET AND NUMBER:  
221 Governor Street

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond

STATE: Virginia

CODE: 51

# 12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

Name: Junius R. Fishburne, Jr.  
Junius R. Fishburne, Jr., Exec. Director  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APR 15 1975

# NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

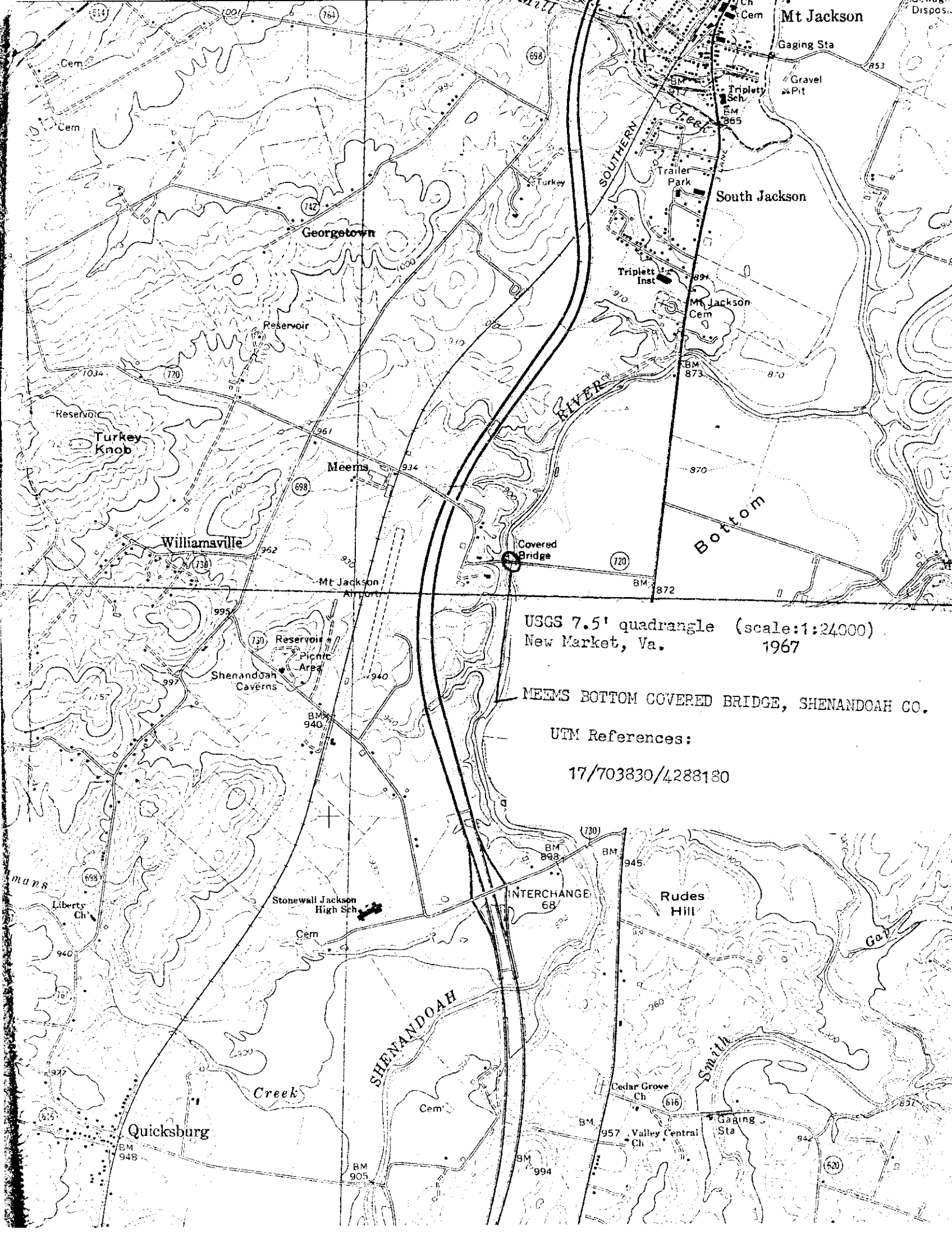
\_\_\_\_\_  
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Keeper of The National Register

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)  
New Market, Va. 1967

MEEMS BOTTOM COVERED BRIDGE, SHENANDOAH CO.

UTM References:

17/703830/4288180